2009

h-diplo

H-Diplo Roundtable Review
www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables
Volume X, No. 25 (2009)
22 July 2009

Roundtable Editors: Thomas Maddux and Diane Labrosse
Roundtable Web Editor: George Fujii
Introduction by Thomas Maddux
Reviewers: David Armitage, James E. Lewis Jr., Reginald C. Stuart, Chris Tudda, William E. Weeks
Response by David C. Hendrickson

David Hendrickson. ***Union, Nation, Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941***. Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2009.

Stable URL: http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-X-25.pdf

Contents

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge 2
Review by David Armitage, Harvard University 6
Review by James E. Lewis, Jr., Kalamazoo College 9
Review by Reginald C. Stuart, Mount Saint Vincent University 11
Review by Chris Tudda, Office of the Historian, Department of State 18
Review by William E. Weeks, University of California, San Diego 22
Author's Response by David C. Hendrickson, Colorado College 26

Copyright © 2009 H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online.

H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for non-profit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author(s), web location, date of publication, H-Diplo, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For other uses, contact the H-Diplo editorial staff at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.

Introduction by Thomas Maddux, California State University, Northridge

In *Union, Nation, Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941*, David Hendrickson has made an important and different contribution to the assessments on American foreign relations and perspectives on America's role in international relations since 1776. In contrast with recent studies by George Herring, Robert Kagan, and Walter Russell Mead, Hendrickson does not offer a detailed assessment of the policies pursued by American presidents. Hendrickson also takes a different approach than Michael Hunt, Walter Hixson, and Joan Hoff Wilson who explore specific themes on America's path to global hegemon such as Hixon's "Myth of America" as a nation exceptionally peaceful, superior in all areas, and committed to self-determination, and Joan Hoff's emphasis on a "mythical view of America as an exceptional nation with God always on its side." [1]

Hendrickson explores the role of ideas in the domestic foreign policy discussion within an architecture that shapes a continuing debate from the Federalists and Jeffersonians in the 1790s to the brink of WWII in 1941. Hendrickson's architecture is identified in the title of the book—union, nation, empire—three ideologies, perspectives, paradigms that evolved and at various times conflicted or reinforced each other. In paying close attention to the contemporary debates, Hendrickson lets American leaders speak for themselves and resists imposing hindsight as leaders struggle to deal with contentious issues of war and peace, expansion and relations with Indian nations, and the divisive impact of slavery . By looking forward rather than backward from the 21st century, Hendrickson reopens a sense of contingency, of conflicting views even on continental expansion, of how slavery intersected with the three perspectives, and how these ideas continued to have an impact into the 20th century.[2]

The reviewers welcome Hendrickson's study as a stimulating sequel to his *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (2003) in which he explored the development of the unionist paradigm and its establishment in the American constitution. The reviewers do have some reservations as indicated below:

---

[1] See Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush: Dreams of Perfectibility* (2008), 2-3. For H-Diplo roundtables on the other studies with the exception of Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (2001), see http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/ for George Herring's *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (2008); Walter Hixson's *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and U.S. Foreign Policy* (2008); Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush* (2008); Michael Hunt's *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained & Wielded Global Dominance* (2007); and Robert Kagan's *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*(2006).

[2] Hendrickson's provides an informative overview of his focus on the "way that American leaders understood the world of international relations… through the prism of American's political experience" in his introduction, pp. ix, 3-22, and in his response to the reviewers.

1) David Armitage considers Hendrickson's analysis of the themes most persuasive in the period through the Civil War but would have welcomed more assessment on the Civil War's international dimensions. Reginald Stuart and Chris Tudda emphasize the importance than Hendrickson's places on the debate between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in the 1790s in dealing with challenges from Europe and their domestic ramifications in establishing realistic and idealist perspectives amid the first of continuing disunionist crises. James Lewis applauds Hendrickson's skillful exploration of his themes and how he includes not only the familiar debates on the War of 1812 and the Mexican War but also domestic issues that to contemporaries had a foreign dimension, such as "over tariffs and nullification, over the removal of the cis-Mississippi Indians and the settlement of the trans-Mississippi West." (2) William Weeks does suggest that Hendrickson's relies on a "conceptually problematic framework" that should have more historiographic analysis, more recognition of the various ways in which the terms are used, and more demonstration of how union, nation and empire are "precursor terms to internationalism, nationalism, and empire." (2)

2) Hendrickson's assessment of the importance of empire and continental expansion in the 19th century, receives approval from most of the reviewers. Tudda and Armitage, for example, emphasize how Hendrickson gives thorough attention to the expansion issue. "Hendrickson show the novel structure forged at the founding," notes Armitage, "as they buckled and bulged under the centripetal pressures of secession and the centrifugal impulses of expansion," and Armitage concludes that "more than any other recent writer, he convincingly links the imperatives of imperialism to the forces of sectionalism" before the Civil War. (2) American leaders and the public were continental expansionists, Tudda notes, but concerns about the spread of slavery, the viability of the republican system if it spread too far, and sectional political concerns are developed by Hendrickson to show the contingency and resistance to expansion. The author indicates, however, that American Indians never experienced much contingency with a public that wanted their land and removal and leaders who deferred to their wishes. (2) Weeks offers the strongest dissent in his critique in suggesting that Hendrickson excessively downplays what Weeks considers the "idea of an American empire as fundamental to understanding to U.S. history." Weeks finds Hendrickson's attention to the opposition to expansion by the Federalists, the Whigs in the Mexican War, and after 1865 to various proposals for overseas expansion before 1898 as excessive , especially since the U.S. ended up expanding dispute the opposition. (2-4) Hendrickson devotes most of his response to Week's critique, emphasizing that he rejects placing a primacy on union, nation or empire : "my key point is to insist on the inadequacy of univocal accounts that privilege one of these concepts, each of them powerful in its own right, to the exclusion of the others." (2)

3) Hendrickson applies a similar approach in his evaluation of post-1865 considerations of overseas expansion and the Spanish-American War and ensuing acquisition of colonies, bases, protectorates, and hegemony in the Caribbean and Western hemisphere and receives a similar response from the reviewers.

Hendrickson notes the renewed interest in expansion from Canada to Mexico and Santo Domingo as well as the vision of Secretary of State William Seward for a hemispheric and Pacific empire. However, Hendrickson points to the obstacles to overseas expansion before 1898 and emphasizes that Seward opposed forcible annexation. When imperialism arrived in 1898 and soon shifted to a preferred informal empire through interventions under the Monroe Doctrine, Hendrickson integrates this into his late 19th century paradigm of nationalism, imperialism, and internationalism. (p. 274) Weeks again questions Hendrickson's analysis that the anti-imperialists lost the battle over the annexation of the Philippines but won the "war" in bolstering traditional American resistance to involuntary annexations versus an informal empire. "There have always been those who have decreid acts of imperial expansion as counter to U.S.values," Weeks concludes, "but those voices have consistently been ignored or overwhelmed by the imperial imperatives of the moment." (3)

4) The reviewers have more reservations about Hendrickson's effort to extend his study to 1941. Lewis and other reviewers favorably emphasize the value of Hendrickson linking the internationalism of the 20th century under Woodrow Wilson and his adherents with the unionism of the earlier period. Armitage and Tudda, however, suggest that the "strong lines of Hendrickson's earlier analysis become more blurred" (Armitage, 3) Wilson indicated an awareness, as Hendrickson point out, of the relationship of his proposed League of Nations with U.S. federalism as a model to maintain peaceful relations among states, but Wilson preferred to depict the League as a Monroe Doctrine security organization for Europe. (p. 329) By the late 1930s, Stuart points out that Hendrickson continues to explore his major themes: "the quandary about nation or empire (no longer about union except in international federal terms) remained, but these were interwoven themes, not alternatives." (4)

Participants:

David C. Hendrickson is Professor of Political Science at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, where he has taught since 1983. He is the author of *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (2003), among other works. He has written three books with Robert W. Tucker: *The Fall of the First British Empire: Origins of the War of American Independence* (1982), *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (1990), and *The Imperial Temptation: The New World Order and America's Purpose* (1992). He was Robert J. Fox Distinguished Service Professor at Colorado College from 2004 to 2009 and was chair of the Political Science Department from 2000 to 2003. He reviewed books for *Foreign Affairs* ("United States") from 1994 to 1998 and has published essays in a variety of foreign policy journals. He has a presentation on the financial crisis ("Cause for Depression") at http://pictorial-guide-to-crisis.blogspot.com/. He received a B.A. in History from Colorado College in 1976 and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Johns Hopkins University in 1982. His website is www.davidhendrickson.org.

David Armitage (PhD, Cambridge) is the Lloyd C. Blankfein Professor of History at Harvard University. Among his publications are *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Harvard University Press, 2007), and, as co-editor, *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840* (Palgrave, 2009). He is currently working on a history of ideas of civil war from Rome to Iraq.

James E. Lewis Jr. is an associate professor of history at Kalamazoo College. He has published The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829 (1998), John Quincy Adams: Policymaker for the Union (2001), and The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain? (2003), and was the contributing editor for Chapter 5 of Robert L. Beisner, ed., Guide to American Foreign Relations Since 1600 (2003). He is currently writing a study of the Burr Conspiracy.

Reginald C. Stuart received a PhD from the University of Florida (1974) and is a Professor of History and Political & Canadian Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, and a Fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS. His books include *United States Expansionism and British North America 1775-1871* (UNC Press, 1988) which received the 1990 Corey Prize; *War and American Thought: From the Revolution to the Monroe Doctrine* (Kent State University Press, 1982); *The Half-Way Pacifist: Thomas Jefferson's View of War* (U of Toronto Press, 1976); and *Dispersed Relations: Canadians and Americans in Upper North America* (Woodrow Wilson Center and Johns Hopkins University presses, 2007). Currently in press with Praeger/ABC CLIO: *The War of 1812 & Civil Military Affairs: An Era of Transition* (2009 projected).

Chris Tudda is a Historian in the Declassification and Publishing Division in the Office of the Historian, Department of State, where he declassifies manuscripts for the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series and co-produces the Office's internet-only publications. He earned a B.A. from the University of Vermont in 1987 and the Ph.D. from American University in 2002. He is the author of *The Truth is our Weapon: The Rhetorical Diplomacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles* (2006). His most recent publication is "A Messiah that will Never Come: British Reconciliation Efforts, American Independence, and Revolutionary War Diplomacy," *Diplomatic History* 32 (November 2008). He is currently writing a history of Nixon's opening to China and a reassessment of American revolutionary diplomacy.

William E. Weeks received his Ph.D. at the University of California, San Diego in 1986 and specializes in 19th century U.S. History at the University of California, San Diego. He is the author of *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), *Building the Continental Empire: American Expansion from the Revolution to Civil War* (1996) and, as a contributing editor, "Expansion into the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific, 1815-1861," in *American Foreign Relations since 1600: Guide to the Literature*, 2nd edition (2003). His work explores the relationship between American nationalism and American imperialism**.**

Review by David Armitage, Harvard University

International Relations theorists seem to be natural trinitarians. Think of Martin Wight's division of international thought into three camps of Realists, Rationalists, and Revolutionists, which became variously triads of Machiavellians, Grotians, and Kantians, or theorists of international anarchy, habitual intercourse, and moral solidarity. More recently, Michael Doyle proposed three strains of international realism, liberalism, and socialism, which the political theorist David Boucher soon followed with a trio of Empirical Realism, Universal Moral Order, and Historical Reason.[1] So far, students of American foreign relations have not had much truck with such trichotomies, largely because they failed to accommodate American sources or thinkers. In *Union, Nation, or Empire*, David C. Hendrickson means to fill that gap with an ambitious "history of international thought as seen through the prism of America's political experience" (p. ix) which he hopes will prove that "American thought concerning international relations is just as important to world history" (p. xiv) as the overwhelmingly European traditions that are more usually deployed. The result is a richly heterodox study written along orthodox trinitarian lines.

The key terms of Hendrickson's title – *Union, Nation, or Empire* – encapsulate his three major themes of internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism in U.S. history from the Founding Era to American entry into World War II. He treats these variously as ideologies, institutions, and identities, the forces that motivated policies, the changing forms of power, and the reigning conceptions of America's position on a continent, in its hemisphere, and as part of the wider world. Hendrickson notes that from 1789 to 1941 union, nation, and empire "were of fundamental importance in the development of American foreign policy. Like Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they formed a seemingly indissoluble trinity" (p. 361). However, much of his book shows that, unlike the three persons of Christian theology, these factors were as likely to be in competition as they were to be conjoined. Their collisions lend *Union, Nation, and Empire* its undoubted narrative energy and drive, even if Hendrickson's own use of them as analytical categories loses some of its edge as he reaches the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Union, Nation, or Empire is most persuasive in its treatment of the period from the Constitution to the Civil War and its aftermath. Here Hendrickson builds on the granitic foundations of his last major work, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (2003). In that book, he demonstrated the benefits of seeing the Constitution as less a miracle in Philadelphia than as the basis of a "Philadelphian system", an international agreement to secure regional peace and stability and hence a step on the road from Utrecht

[1] Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, eds. Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1991); Wight, "An Anatomy of International Thought." *Review of International Studies*, 13 (1987): 221-27; Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace: Realism, Liberalism, and Socialism* (New York: Norton, 1996); David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations: From Thucydides to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). All page references in the text are to Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*.

to Vienna by way of America.[2] *Peace Pact* concluded with the observation that "it is striking that the founders' discourse on federalism anticipates in crucial respects our own discourse of nationalism, internationalism, and imperialism, with the structure of argument continuing to revolve around similar theories, predicaments, and aspirations."[3] *Union, Nation, or Empire* drives this insight through a century and a half of American history illuminatingly envisaged as international history.

Hendrickson shows the novel structures forged at the founding as they buckle and bulge under the centripetal pressures of secession and the centrifugal impulses of expansion. More than any other recent writer, he convincingly links the imperatives of imperialism to the forces of sectionalism in the decades between the Louisiana Purchase and the Civil War, when "it was in the nature of the federal union that it must navigate the narrow passage between anarchy and empire" (p. 117). To be sure, Hendrickson does pay less attention than, say, Robert Kagan lately did to "The Foreign Policy of Slavery" in opening the sectional divide,[4] but he does give ample space to U.S. relations with its domestic dependent nations and rightly places westward expansion on a spectrum of possible options from Cuba and the Caribbean to Canada and Oregon by way of Mexico and Texas. Hendrickson also beats against the tides of nationalist teleology and the inevitability of Southern secession by asking not why a long-delayed war came when it did, but rather how peace could have been maintained for so long before 1861. His answer? "The American union … was a raging state system disguised by the forms of a constitution" (p. 221), a lapidary conclusion that should set hares running among nineteenth-century American historians for some time to come. Likewise, his teasing comparison of the U.S. from the 1820s and 1861 with Europe from 1871 to 1914 – "the same restless and rapid change in the bases of power, the same breaches of faith, the same fears of domination, the same collapse in hegemonic war" (p. 107) – startles even as it gradually persuades.

Whether less internationally- (and theoretically-) inclined historians of the nineteenth century will rise to the challenges of *Union, Nation, or Empire* remains to be seen. They might balk at his relatively brief accounts of slavery and his elision of race, and they will no doubt be struck by the gap between parts 6 and 7 of the book where one might expect an account of the course of the Civil War itself in terms of internationalism (perhaps in comparison with the 1848 Revolutions or the Taiping Rebellion), nationalism (both Confederate and Unionist), and imperialism (Confederate again). However, Hendrickson does briefly but suggestively place the Civil War's consequences in "the new geography of

[2] Compare Daniel H. Deudney, "The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and the Balance of Power in the American States-Union, 1787-1861." *International Organization*, 49 (1995): 191-228; Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), ch. 6; Peter Onuf and Nicholas Onuf, *Federal Union, Modern World: The Law of Nations in an Age of Revolutions, 1776-1814* (Madison, Wis.: Madison House, 1993); Onuf and Onuf, *Nations, Markets, and War: Modern History and the American Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

[3] David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Lawrence, Ks.: University of Kansas Press, 2003), p. 260.

[4] Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), ch. 7; for Hendrickson *contra* Kagan see *Union, Nation, or Empire*, pp. 240-41.

world power" (p. 248) emerging at the same moment in central Europe, Germany, and Meiji Japan: here he is pushing at a door that, for example, C. A. Bayly and George Herring have also recently nudged open.[5]

Others in this Forum will be better qualified than I to judge Hendrickson's account of American nationhood and empire in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. I found his use of the trinity less illuminating in the last third of the book, in part because union – the *idée-force* of the U.S. itself as a state-system that propels both *Peace Pact* and much of *Union, Nation, or Empire*– mostly drops out of the story. Internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism mutate into other triads like federalism, legalism, and pacifism; as a result, the strong lines of Hendrickson's earlier analysis become more blurred. Hendrickson also pays little attention to the rise of international law in this period, surely a key development in American international thought to lay alongside analysis of international institutions and foreign policy. Hendrickson recalls Andrew Jackson's outburst after invading Florida, as reported by John Quincy Adams: "D—n Grotius! D—n Puffendorff! D—n Vattel!" (p. 154). Hendrickson's attitude to James Brown Scott and his ilk (let alone to Henry Wheaton and Francis Lieber earlier) might not be quite so violent, but their omission from his account is striking, if not unprecedented in the literature.[6]

Hendrickson's *Peace Pact* made it impossible to imagine the framing of the Constitution without understanding it in late eighteenth-century terms as an international agreement. *Union, Nation, or Empire* has now made it equally unthinkable to ignore the multiple strands of structural reflection that informed American international relations in the following century and a half. All that remains now is for Hendrickson to complete his story with a third volume, covering the period from, say, the Second World War to the Second Gulf War.[7] What better way to test the robustness of his American trinity than with a full-blown trilogy?

[5] C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1814* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 161-65; George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 224-25.

[6] Compare Martti Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Mankind: The Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), but see e.g. Mark Weston Janis, *The American Tradition of International Law: Great Expectations, 1789-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) and Christopher R. Rossi, *Broken Chain of Being: James Brown Scott and the Origins of Modern International Law* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998).

[7] Compare David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, *Revisions in Need of Revising: What Went Wrong in the Iraq War*, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College (December 2005): http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=637

Review by James E. Lewis, Jr., Kalamazoo College

Six years ago, David C. Hendrickson published Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding, a brilliant examination of the emergence of what he called a "unionist paradigm" among British North Americans during the colonial and revolutionary eras and its culmination in the Constitution of 1787. In Peace Pact, he promised a second volume that would explore the impact of unionist concerns on both the American states' system and U.S. foreign relations from 1789 to 1861. With Union, Nation, or Empire, Hendrickson has greatly exceeded that promise by taking the story to the eve not of the Civil War, but of U.S. entry into World War II. This book highlights "what became of [the unionist paradigm], especially as it was transformed under the impact of the great wars that followed: in 1812, 1846, 1861, 1898, 1914, and 1939" (p. xiii).

Focusing upon a series of debates, some of which brought on or sprang from these wars and some of which did not, Hendrickson traces the relationship over the long sweep of pre-World War II history of three ideologies that have been seen as explaining U.S. foreign policy during and since the war. Imperialism, whether driven by the dynamics of expanding capitalism or by the possibilities of military predominance, accepted and encouraged the development of systems of colonies, protectorates, and less formal dependencies that could institutionalize U.S. sway over some part of the world. Nationalism reflected an exceptionalist view of the United States in which "the nation's wants, needs, fears, interests, ideals, dreams, and delusions" were always "the key preoccupation" and diplomatic, economic, and other relations with the world's nations were merely "instrumental" to national ends (p. 3). But it is the third of these ideologies, internationalism, that receives the fullest and richest investigation. Hendrickson's crucial intellectual move is to show that the internationalism of the twentieth century emerged from the unionism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At times, internationalists explicitly recurred to the unionist logic of the Founding. Even as that logic was being lost to most popular and even scholarly accounts of the Founding, however, internationalists acted as unionists had a century or more earlier: they were willing to accept restraints on individual states (including their own) by entering into rule-based, multi-state institutions that could promote the common good and prevent the dual dangers of international anarchy and all-consuming empire. As Hendrickson persuasively demonstrates, even after the Civil War transformed the federal union, key elements of the unionist paradigm remained available to be reworked and assembled into the internationalism of Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt. "All the core elements of the old paradigm," he shows, "are present in Wilson's thought" (p. 330).

Union, Nation, or Empire unfolds the evolving interplay between imperialism, nationalism, and unionism/internationalism between 1787 and 1939. While Hendrickson pays special attention to the impact of the nation's great wars, he does not omit the many important debates that neither led to nor arose from these wars. He examines, for instance, the conflicts between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson in the 1790s, the battle over the Panama Congress in the 1820s, and the controversies over encouraging European revolutionaries in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Incorporating the perspective of the

original unionists, moreover, Hendrickson recognizes that only a single act of secession stood between a single political entity and a complex state system on the territory of the United States itself. Accordingly, he is no less interested in debates that might seem to be merely "domestic" to us, but were always incipiently "foreign" to contemporaries--over Louisiana and Missouri, over tariffs and nullification, over the removal of the cis-Mississippi Indians and the settlement of the trans-Mississippi West, and, of course, over first secession and later reconstruction.

A brief review cannot begin to do justice to the insights to be gained from Hendrickson's rereading of this series of debates. He repeatedly demonstrates the pervasiveness of unionist concerns in the shaping of the nation's domestic and foreign policies, even as he explodes the sense of inevitability with which we so often view the past. "If it is remembered that what is now considered inevitable was once widely considered as undesirable or improbable," he insists in a challenge to an easy acceptance of Manifest Destiny, "we shall have a better sense of the debates that unfolded over expansion in the era that followed the War of 1812" (p. 115).

Throughout this book, Hendrickson shows a deep knowledge of both the secondary literature and the primary sources that are relevant to his study. In a book of such sweep, there are obviously going to be gaps in the research. A student of any one of the myriad topics that Union, Nation or Empire explores could easily point to important books or articles and valuable documents or other sources that might have given the author a more complete or more nuanced view of that subject. But, as a whole, one must be impressed by the thoroughness of the research, which includes works of both history and political science among its secondary literature and writings from outside the narrow circle of policy makers among its primary sources.

While the book generally reads as history, Hendrickson makes clear at its beginning and end that he is also writing as a political scientist with one eye on the present and future uses of his historical reconstructions. In that respect, his book could easily sit alongside such policy-minded, single-volume studies of the nation's diplomatic history as: Robert Kagan's Dangerous Nation; Michael Lind's The American Way of Strategy; and Walter A. McDougall's, Promised Land, Crusader State. Because it is more nuanced and less tendentious than is often the case with such books, its policy prescriptions are more subtle and less univocal. Nonetheless, Hendrickson argues, and shows, that "there is much wisdom" in these debates, which have been "so often consigned to irrelevance since 1945" (p. xi). As such, his book has important things to say to the policy making elite about multilateralism, interventionism, a "democratic peace," and many other contemporary concerns. Most importantly, perhaps, it finds sources for an internationalist approach to the modern world that are at least as unassailably "American"--rather than merely "Wilsonian"--as any variation of nationalism or imperialism.

Union, Nation, or Empire is an important book that deserves the careful attention of anyone interested in either the past or the present of U.S. diplomacy.

Review by Reginald C. Stuart, Mount Saint Vincent University

David C. Hendrickson's *Union, Nation, or Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941* is a masterful synthesis of the intellectual and political history of American ideas about the United States and its international role from the late Eighteenth Century to the point of entry into World War II. This book can also be seen as an extended elaboration of Hendrickson's *Peace Pact* where he interpreted the US Constitution in terms of the central themes studied here. In *Union, Nation, or Empire* he interweaves the evolution of these themes in American thinking to reflect on the unfolding national character, how the sense various Americans had of their country's place and purpose as history unfolded. Moreover, he argues that the weight politicians, opinion leaders, and policy makers placed on these alternate visions of the meaning of the United States formed the foundations of foreign and expansionist policies. At the same time, union, nation, and empire reflected ideals, domestic partisan differences, and more narrowly focused ambitions. Recent US foreign policy ventures and misfires also seem to have influenced Hendrickson's reinterpretation, as his contemporary commentary (sometimes with regular coauthor, Political Scientist Robert W. Tucker) reveals. As a result, while *Union, Nation, or Empire* stands on its own, it stands both linked with Hendrickson's previous work and serves as a way to connect and interpret the vast commentary and bibliography on America's place and role in the world that has emerged in recent decades.[1] In terms of historical sources, Hendrickson's extensive reading in primary and secondary sources is evident in both his citations and extensive bibliography. Indeed, he seems to have pored over the published papers of every major (and many minor) American statesman and commentator from John Adams to Franklin D. Roosevelt along with a mass of other material both primary and secondary.

Hendrickson keeps his historian's cap firmly in place in *Union, Nation, or Empire*, even though he opens with an analytical exploration of how successive American leaders and those informed about international affairs conceived of their country's external role and purpose. The ostensible alternatives of the title imply policy choices, but Hendrickson shows how they interwove when foreign affairs (or expansionist ambitions) came under public and political discussion at different points in the national experience as well as in the foundations of foreign policy from the Revolutionary era to contemporary times. As an example Hendrickson understands in depth, Thomas Jefferson mulled over and selected the policies that reflected his outlook and ambitions as much as succeeding presidents

[1] David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2006); *The Lion and the Lamb: Realism and Liberalism Reconsidered* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002); "A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy," *World Policy Journal* (Spring 2004), 102-112. David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, "A Test of Power," *The National Interest Online,* (September I, 2006), 7 pp, http://www.nationalinterest.org (accessed March 18, 2009). Tucker is Professor Emeritus at the Paul Nitze Center of the Johns Hopkins University. Among his many books germane to the themes of *Union, Nation, or Empire* are *American Empire and the Practice of Academic Self Delusion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968) and *Skirmishes at the Edge of Empire: The United States and International Terrorism* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997)

proved wont to do.[2] Jefferson along with George Washington, John Adams and their successors, interwove and selected among the three "alternatives" of the title and devised policies and rationales for particular problems. This is also how Hendrickson believes that the evolution of American foreign policy must be understood in the ever changing international environment. Union, nation, and empire are Siamese triplets that romp in the warp and woof of American intellectual, cultural, social, and hence political and international history from the late Eighteenth to modern times. US international history after 1783 has been for him less a matter of which theme dominated policy making than the relative strength each perspective had at any given moment. Throughout, Hendrickson's mastery of the source, sophisticated analysis, and compelling narrative clarify which elements of the complex mélange of thought, interest, and intention shaped US foreign policy at successive moments in time. Always tacit in these cases is Hendrickson's conviction that they still explain American strategic thinking and global policy making.

Hendrickson explains that after 1783 republican Americans debated on ideological as well as partisan grounds whether the United States was a union or a nation. Before long it also became an empire although republicanism, in theory at least, eschewed imperialism. At the same time, the Founding Fathers generation and their successors in high office carved out policies that reflected national ideological, social, and territorial ambitions that ordinary Americans pursued unconsciously by way of their migrations to frontier regions claimed (often *pro forma*) by Great Britain in the northwest and Spain in the trans-Mississippi continental regions and Far West. In a previous book on Jefferson, Hendrickson and Tucker showed how he *de facto* established the United States as both a national and imperial power in North America. They noted that Jefferson, far less the apostle of reason than his legend might suggest, readily wielded military force as an instrument of Republican foreign policy against the Barbary Pirates, for the acquisition of western territory, and even as a police force over American citizens during his 1807-1809 Embargo. James Madison similarly used or condoned military force as an instrument of policy before and during the War of 1812 to secure territorial objectives in the Spanish controlled Gulf of Mexico littoral. James Monroe continued this expansionist policy tradition in his 1823 "Doctrine." He too used military forces to secure the national domain. National policy followed and ratified the ambitions and exploits of settlers in local regions.

As a result, union, nation, and (rather than or) empire wove through public, partisan and policy debates over international relations throughout the Nineteenth Century. Meanwhile, national interests cropped up on all points of the compass in the North American neighborhood. Hendrickson traces the evolution of his themes and debates through these events as well as the internal debates and published commentary of their times. Throughout, the United States remained simultaneously a nation and an ever expanding union in North America that resembled an empire. To be sure, some Americans demurred and dissented from the ideological, material, and political arguments for expansion,

[2] Robert W. Tucker & David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1990).

although North American circumstances allowed Washington to act as though it were indeed continentally sovereign. Once independent, Mexico had but a feeble hold on its northern territories from California to Texas and could do little to forestall US domination of its North American territories. Once again, Washington policies in effect ratified the actions of migrants and entrepreneurs who engaged in westward expansion and settlement on Mexican territory. As a result, the US (union and nation) absorbed subject peoples such as natives, French, Spanish, and Mexican and Filipino peoples, and sustained slavery while it added new territories that transformed into states. In the broader international arena, the Congress of Vienna seemed to Americans a system of power, although James Monroe, for one, saw it as a quasi-federative structure. Independent Latin American republics also emerged, and in the Panama Congress, Latin Americans copied republican forms. Nation and Union triumphed because US Americans stood aloof from them.

Meanwhile, Great Britain allowed and formally sanctioned the steady development of social and economic interweaving between her North American provincials and Americans that Hendrickson sketches here. At the same time, the legend of an "undefended" border had a solid foundation in fact and its management which led Britain to accept and even to encourage semi-independence for the colonies. The Dominion of Canada appeared in 1867 with domestic political (but not international) sovereignty.[3] Ironically, those seemingly best suited by language, interests, and heritage to be part of the American union, nation, and empire stood aloof, while those least akin to Americans themselves, French, Spanish, Mexican, and black slaves, remained within or fell under US control. As territorial growth translated into a more complex union, however, social and economic developments placed ever greater stress on the pragmatism and political accommodations that sustained the United States as a Union, Nation, and Empire, but domestic forces generated a Civil War that fractured the country in 1861. That costly catastrophe left a legacy of far reaching moral, social, economic, and political legacies that lingered long after Union armies subdued and eradicated the Confederacy.

At the same time, Northern values achieved national dominance and shaped the motives and form of foreign policy through the later Nineteenth Century and into the era of World War I. That evolution changed American ideas about empire. Hendrickson by default dismisses the accusations some Canadian historians have made about US ambitions to acquire British North America after 1865, but it seems clear that commercial and moral, not national ambition, drove subsequent US territorial expansionism. By the 1890s an Anglo-American rapprochement, as well as the evolution of ideas Hendrickson sorts into his themes, facilitated the controversial arrival of the US overseas empire following the Spanish-American War of 1898. Some Americans even read the US federal union as the world of the future in miniature, as British journalist William Stead suggested. Theodore Roosevelt and Alfred Thayer Mahan among many applauded, but William Graham Sumner captured the moral irony of this imperial expansion in his *The Conquest of the United States by Spain*. Withal, the United States had an overseas empire that by default inserted

[3] Reginald C. Stuart, *United States Expansionism and British North America, 1775-1871* (Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina Press, 1988).

Washington into pre-1914 global politics and nurtured American internationalist ideas. Hendrickson's vast research, deep reading and understanding of the documents, short chapters, and well defined organization make his complex narrative of how union, nation, and (not or) empire conflicted, competed, and ultimately reconciled in US foreign policy.

Hendrickson notes that on one level the American sense of moral separation from Europe that had prevailed from 1815 onward sank into revulsion when the complex pre-1914 alliance system collapsed into World War I. This conflict became global in scope because of the participants' overseas imperial interests. US neutrality reflected moral (union, nation) perspectives. Arguments still rage over Woodrow Wilson's motives for taking the US nation into this war, but his federalism shaped the form and character of his expectations in the League of Nations proposal that emerged in the 1919 Treaty of Paris. This was US federalism writ global. Wilson's outlook and recommendations were, as Hendrickson analyzes them, somewhat situational. Wilson was national and imperial regarding US interests in Latin America and the Far East, Liberal in the Fourteen Points about a peace plan for Europe, and partisan within the United States. Hendrickson reminds us that his influence with the Europeans evaporated once the hostilities stopped. They assumed Germany had surrendered. Wilson's dreams dissolved when the Fourteen Points (except for the League) evaporated in the toxic political climate of the Versailles conference.

Meanwhile, Wilson's health collapsed while he waged his foredoomed campaign to make the United States part of the League of Nations. Most Americans (especially Wilson's political antagonists) thought in terms of nation, and Wilson himself misread post-war politics in both Europe and his own country. Americans rejected the League because it meant adopting international policies and entanglement in European affairs. Moreover, in the post-1918 climate Americans saw no need for collective security and clung to a sense of invulnerability based on geography. Soon, however, the Europeans' nationalism, the allies thirst for vengeance, and new radical ideologies – Fascism, Nazism, and Communism – foreclosed all chances that a meaningful international system would develop. Hendrickson's analysis here offers new insights into the complex evolution of American thought and policy in this much-studied era of US foreign policy. The quandary about nation or empire (no longer about union except in international federal terms) remained, but these were interwoven themes, not alternatives, as Hendrickson portrays their evolution.

Hendrickson next argues that "Isolationism" is a misnomer for the 1920s and 1930s. He prefers non-interventionist. "Good Neighbor" was also a misnomer. American public opinion and political leaders in the United States maintained their faith in national invulnerability. The sources Hendrickson steeped himself in revealed that American commentators and leaders believed that repeat involvement in European affairs would destroy their nation. The rise of the dictators, Adolph Hitler (and Nazism), Benito Mussolini (and Fascism), and Joseph Stalin (and Communism) generated debates among Americans about a quasi-union with Atlantic European democracies. While politicians argued in Congress and commentators in the press about future US policy, the Japanese resolved Franklin Roosevelt's political and policy dilemma by their attack on Pearl Harbor.

Hendrickson's narrative and analysis stop in 1941 and leaves us teetering on the brink of an intellectual precipice. It seems cruel, with so much to come, but there is more than can comfortably fit within a single volume. But wait! His prolific productivity and his frequent partnership with Robert Tucker hold out some hope that a successor volume to *Union, Nation, or Empire* might be in the planning and research stage. Such a work would complete the volume under review and Hendrickson brings as much authority to modern US foreign policy as he does to its history.

After 1945 the United in States marched through the world as a colossus for a time, a federal union with a global sense of national purpose based on political ascendancy in a world where ideological and political imperialism would shape the international system Americans promoted the United Nations as an international federal union and pursued their sense of global national purpose based on its economic, political, and military ascendency. *Union, Nation, and Empire: American Internationalism and Globalism in Modern Times* seems a likely working title if Hendrickson decides to take up the challenge.

The case for the historical continuity of the US role in the wars of modern times implied in this book also seems clear enough. Americans have, in fact, debated the meaning of and taken part in what have arguably been four world wars (in causation, operation, consequence, and continuity) since the late Nineteenth Century. Each war (and American involvement) had its roots in the preceding historical era and the changes (social, economic, political, and geopolitical) set the foundations for the subsequent conflict and an evolving series of attempts at global organization and management. Hendrickson has argued that successive generations of American politicians, officials, journalists, writers, commentators, and citizens drew from their history as well as present circumstances and their perceived future when they debated policy. US involvement in each "world war" changed perspectives and created the context and dynamics for the next historical phase.[4]

The general character of each world war can only be sketched here, but the continuity is clear enough. World War I encompassed the major European powers engaged in overseas imperial competition before 1914. A veneer of altruism (the "White Man's Burden) did little to mask their economic and geopolitical goals. Their imperial rivalry reflected domestic European power politics and generated the agreements and alliances that faced off in World War I. The Spanish-American war had by default made the United States part of this global political environment, albeit on the fringes. Once established in the far Western Pacific, however, Americans encountered the early phases of Japanese expansion because of the insular empire they acquired in the Philippines. That also involved the United States in the post-1918 political reordering that followed the Treaty of Versailles, despite its rejection by the US Senate. The results and consequences of World War I to a large degree generated the forces that led to World War II. From the early 1930s on Japan

[4] *"Imagining the Next War,"* A Conference Sponsored by the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, Occasional Paper Number Nine (March 2007); Andrew J. Bachevich ,"The Real World War IV," *The Wilson Quarterly* (Winter 2005), 36-63.

also confronted Europeans in Southeast and South Asia. Franklin Roosevelt's administration had already become a tacit British ally by the time Japanese forces bombed Pearl Harbor and transformed the United States into an open belligerent. The shape of World War III (aka the Cold War) was evident by the final months of the struggle to crush Germany and Japan. This petered out by the late 1980s, but left a residue and conditions scattered through Asia and the Middle East that generated (in some cases continued) what might be called World War IV between nation states, whether arrayed in NATO, or associated in the United Nations. Now, instead of other countries or alliances, Washington faced non-state actors motivated by one or more of ideology, sectarianism, tribalism, brigandage, or competing groups, often in ruined states, or states that never were.

World War IV lacks political coherence, but reflects the shifting character of global political affairs. It has included the suicide hijackers of 9/11, suicide bomb attacks in Madrid and English cities, North Korea's nuclear truculence. Failed states, or those that never really were, such as Somalia, or the sectarian suicide commandoes who attacked the Mumbai hotel in November of 2008, and NATO's operations in Afghanistan against religious fundamentalists close to a festering northeast frontier with Pakistan all suggest that for the United States, the themes of union, nation, or empire will remain significant when presidents and administrations attempt to sustain, contrive policy to grapple with security issues, or wage wars in global theaters. How will all this interweave with Hendrickson's themes of union, nation, and empire? What perspective will policy makers take?[5]

Meanwhile, *Union, Nation* stands on its own. David C. Hendrickson has provided a rich and nuanced interpretation of the domestic intellectual and political forces behind the formation and execution of US foreign policy from 1789 to 1941. At the same time, he has created an intellectual paradigm that helps us to understand the foundations on which current and future US policy makers will both debate and make decisions about their country's national interests and how they might be pursued into the near future. Hendrickson will also likely play a continuing role in this process. His commentary on recent US foreign policy is also well grounded in his historical interpretation of the intertwined streams of union, nation, and empire in American thought and politics. In the hurried management of contemporary affairs, we need historical perspective. In a 2004 review essay, for example, he reminded readers of the Enlightenment's continuing significance for the thinking of the American Founding Fathers, and in turn their relevance for contemporary policy making.[6] Was this a union, nation, or empire? Which kind or blend of thinking might policy makers rest their outlooks on as a foundation for analysis, recommendations, strategy, and actions will depend on circumstances as well as their understanding. They will be aided, enriched, perhaps even comforted if they keep a well

[5] David C. Hendrickson and Robert W. Tucker, "A Test of Power," *The National Interest Online* (September 1, 2006), 7 pp. http://www.nationalinterest.org, accessed March 18, 2009; David Hendrickson, *The Lion and the Lamb: Realism and Liberalism Reconsidered* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002); Hendrickson, "A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy," *World Policy Journal* (Spring 2004), 102-112.

thumbed copy of this book on their reference shelf because no policy analyst or maker can plot a future course of action without a solid sense of the past.

Review by Chris Tudda, Office of the Historian, Department of State

Note: The views presented here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State or the United States Government. I would like to thank my colleague Kristin L. Ahlberg for her helpful comments and suggestions.

When I teach the Department of State's newly-hired diplomats about U.S. diplomatic history during the first century of the Republic, I always begin by asking "How should the United States act internationally?" The answers run the gamut from realists who advocate the promotion of U.S. national interests––and then argue about how to define the national interest––to idealists who believe that the U.S. should be a force for good. The realists in turn ask who defines "good," and point out this stance often requires the use of coercion, especially military power. After much polite back-and-forth I reassure them that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, only dilemmas. I also remind them that they are in good company, because these debates began over 200 years ago and have defined the discussion of American foreign (and sometimes domestic) policy ever since.

I am therefore happy to report that the publication of David Hendrickson's latest well-researched, elegantly-written, thoughtfully-argued, and ambitious volume, *Union, Nation, Empire: The American Debate over International Relations, 1789-1941*, validates the two central premises of my course. First, he demonstrates that American leaders have argued about all the "big themes" in U.S. foreign policy since the founders debated the Constitution. (p. 8) Second, he explains that these specific themes––continental and overseas expansion, independence, neutralism, free trade, protectionism, nationalism, internationalism, and federalism––conflicted with the goal of preserving the Union during the 72 years between Washington's inauguration and the Civil War.

Time and time again, Hendrickson persuasively argues, American leaders resisted the temptation to expand overseas because they valued the preservation of the Union above all else. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, while "the lure of conquest" seemed initially attractive to some Americans, in the end, the majority dismissed it as "highly unrepublican and dangerous to free institutions." (p. 42) Instead, Hendrickson contends that American leaders adopted what I would call rhetorical expansionism or interventionism. Only after the Civil War destroyed the threat of sectionalism and disunion did the U.S. briefly experience a "surging sense of national identity," what many critics, and historians, have called imperialism. Ardent expansionists then re-defined the Monroe Doctrine to justify overseas expansion. (p. 231)

After a brief introduction that deftly examines the major themes in American diplomacy through the use of numerous, and recent, secondary sources on international relations theory, Hendrickson comes to the heart of his argument. The conflict between Secretary of Treasury Alexander Hamilton and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson for control of foreign policy during the first Washington administration, he shows, set the stage for the next 150 years. All the major themes mentioned above were debated during the 1790s.

Through an exhaustive use of primary documents, including the papers of presidents and other prominent national leaders, Hendrickson effectively shows that as the Republic matured in the 19th century, domestic politics became inextricably linked with foreign affairs, since continental expansion was wrapped up with the issues of slavery and, ultimately, disunion. Hendrickson also skillfully engages in numerous historiographical debates by citing all the relevant secondary literature.

The Federalists during the War of 1812, the Whigs during the Mexican War, and Civil War era leaders like William Seward all argued that American independence required anti-intervention, or the promotion of "external self-determination" by other countries. (pp. 20-21) Therefore they refused to provide material support to newly-formed republican governments because they feared this would set a dangerous precedent that could be used to justify disunion. For example, the U.S. adopted the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 but steadfastly refused to actually interfere in Latin American affairs, and later provided only rhetorical lip service to the Democrats who touched off the 1848 European Revolutions. As for territorial expansion, American leaders reserved the right to expand overseas, but confined their actions to the American continent. Leaders such as John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay assumed that territories like Canada and Cuba would *naturally* gravitate toward union with the United States, thus rendering the use of force moot. The Mexican War, Hendrickson argues, temporarily demonstrated that the U.S., under a youthful Democratic administration, desired territorial conquest. Nonetheless, vociferous opposition from the older Whigs and President James K. Polk's refusal to completely conquer Mexico and absorb it into the Union showed the limits of expansionism in antebellum America.

The most active of the anti-interventionists, Hendrickson notes, were often, but not always, the most ardent anti-slavery advocates. Adams and others feared that overseas intervention would set a precedent that would spread slavery westward. The creation of overseas "independent republics," anti-expansionists contended, would give disunionists or nullifiers like Calhoun ammunition to secede from the union––not to mention allow Indian tribes to create their own separate nations on the American continent.[1] (p. 148) Unionists therefore kicked the slavery can down the road and took half-measures such as the various "compromises" that simultaneously allowed slave and free states into the union. Ironically, the idea of union trumped anti-slavery, but the reality of sectional fights over the expansion of slavery ultimately led to disunion and the Civil War.

Hendrickson calls the events of the late 1890s "a severe distortion" of the American tradition of rhetorical expansionism. (p. 286) The McKinley administration ushered in an era of "new nationalism" consisting of a "new valuation of war" as noble and overseas expansion as the key to American wealth and power. This became most evident when the

[1] Unlike recent scholarship that argues that Americans wanted to expand because they believed in the racial superiority of the white man, Hendrickson shows that the most vehement *anti-expansionists* such as John C. Calhoun argued that overseas expansion would dilute the white race. See Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981). The most recent example of this is George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Still, Adams and Clay feared that Calhoun would use overseas expansion to justify secession over states rights and slavery.

U.S. received the Philippines as a spoil of the war against Spain and then brutally suppressed the Aguinaldo rebellion. (pp. 262-63) The age of self-imposed isolation, Hendrickson contends, had ended.

After Teddy Roosevelt became president following McKinley's assassination, he modified his aggressive tendencies and governed more soberly. The brief period of imperialism morphed into the new idea of internationalism. Hendrickson provocatively asserts that the increasing calls for a federated world government mirrored the ideas of unionism that had dominated 19th century thought. In an initial display of bipartisan consensus, Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson all embraced the idea of expanding Progressive ideas of arbitration, organization, rationalization, and "civilization" to the international arena. International law, cooperation, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, they contended, could ultimately replace war. Unfortunately, once again, the nation found itself involved in another war, this time with the European nations. World War One showed that internationalism had its limits, even under Wilson's idealistic promise that the U.S. had intervened to make the world safe for democracy.

The War and the subsequent call by Wilson for a League of Nations exposed a partisan rift and led to a reversal of party identification in foreign affairs that also mirrored the previous divide over union. Now the Republicans, in the words of the *New Republic*, had embraced nationalism and had become the party of "secession," while the Democrats had shed their nullificationist past and embraced the internationalist concept of "world union." (pp. 302-03) This resulted in the bitter partisan fight over, and defeat of, the League and the call for collective security.

Hendrickson sums up his arguments in four very brief chapters covering the interwar years. This portion is the weakest portion of his sprawling work. For example, Hendrickson argues that the United States had become the world's most dominant nation because the other powers had been fatally weakened by World War One. In retrospect this is probably true, but it certainly was not evident at the time. With great power presumably comes the ability to influence other nations. Yet at Versailles, Wilson failed to either convince the Allies to enact his ideal of self-determination––the British and French merely replaced the Ottoman Empire as colonial masters in the Middle East––or prevent them from punishing Germany instead of creating a more workable international framework. On the other hand, he correctly notes that the U.S. "psychologically" withdrew from world affairs during this time. (p. 344)

It is also puzzling that Hendrickson calls his penultimate, four-page chapter, "Isolation and Neutrality," but fails to analyze the four Neutrality Acts of the 1930s, in particular the way FDR managed to gradually water down each subsequent Act so he could move the country to a more interventionist posture. Nor does Hendrickson mention in his final chapter the passage of the Lend-Lease Act in 1941 that put the final nail in the official Neutrality position's coffin. These chapters would have also benefited from a more detailed examination of John Foster Dulles's repeated calls for internationalism. Dulles wrote numerous articles and a book, *War, Peace and Change* (1939) that, like FDR, presciently

detailed the inadequacies of the interwar international system that the West had created in the 1920s that led to the rise of totalitarianism.

These caveats aside, David Hendrickson has produced yet another work essential to our understanding of American diplomatic history. I encourage all diplomatic historians, new diplomats, and students of history to reserve a permanent place on their book shelves for *Union, Nation, Empire*.

Review by William E. Weeks, University of California, San Diego

My thanks to Tom Maddux for the opportunity to participate in this roundtable of distinguished panelists.

A spectre continues to haunt students of American foreign relations—the spectre of American Empire. From its days as a damning left-wing indictment of America in the 1960s and 70s, to a period of grudging acceptance in the 80s and 90s, and evolving into a positive good (at least in the eyes of neo-conservatives) in the years following the 9/11 attacks, the concept of an American Empire has survived numerous attempts to discredit, ridicule or otherwise marginalize it as a framework for understanding U.S. history. The publication in 2006 of *Dangerous Nation* by noted neo-conservative historian Robert Kagan seemed to mark a turning point in the debate. The book's frank recognition of the imperial origins and relentless expansionism of the United States suggested that an imperial framework for understanding its history had become normalized. American Empire seemed to have evolved into a consensus term subject to sober scholarly evaluation rather than as a lightning rod for controversy.

David Hendrickson's new book *Union, Nation, or Empire* has among its ambitions to "restore the federal union to its proper place in the understanding of American statecraft" (xi) --but it would appear that one of his unstated but no less real ambitions is to de-legitimate the idea of an American Empire as fundamental to understanding U.S. history. This piece will attempt to detail the various, and in my view ultimately unsuccessful, means by which the author does this and to suggest how this issue relates to a fundamental flaw with his approach to the concepts of union, nation, and empire.

Hendrickson frames the debate over American foreign relations as a post-World War II historiographic contest between internationalism, nationalism, and empire. In this scheme, internationalism is defined as "a post- World War II constitutional system or union with America as its leader. This interpretation emphasizes that the United States deliberately embedded itself in international institutions that would serve the common good and operate on the basis of consensus. . ." (3) In contrast, Hendrickson argues that nationalism "visualizes the nation making instrumental alliances with others to preserve its security and to defeat evil and aggressive enemies." (3) The nationalistic bent as concerns foreign relations reflected a policy of engagement without entanglement, a doctrine of freedom of action and pre-occupation with self that at times verged on "narcissistic." (3-4) Finally, Hendrickson "visualizes" an American Empire characterized by "dependents, protectorates, and satrapies" a "pax Americana that in fact was more than ordinarily bellicose." He outlines "two main variants" of the "imperial interpretation:" an "exploitative" global capitalist regime "with America at its head," and an America the Dominant, a nation addicted to force and self-assertion beyond its boundaries.

On this problematic foundation, Hendrickson builds an intellectual history of American foreign policy as a long term debate between advocates or opponents of union, nation and

empire, precursor terms as he sees it to internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism. Underneath the debate over union, nation, or empire, "lie ideologies of cooperation, egotism, and domination, which compete for primacy" over the course of American history. (5)

To this historian there are numerous flaws with how the author conceives of the problem. First, he characterizes the "grand narratives of American foreign policy since World War II" as falling into three categories but references only a handful of texts in his notes in support of this assertion, and those he does reference are from a relatively narrow ideological perspective. He might have devoted an entire chapter on the literature to better ground his historiographic claims. Second, his definitions of internationalism, nationalism, and empire are too simple and cannot do justice to the range of ways and contexts in which those terms are used. Third, his attempt to establish union, nation, and empire as precursor terms to internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism seems neither intuitively plausible nor well demonstrated in the book. Finally, to link internationalism, nationalism, and empire in a one-to-one fashion to "ideologies of cooperation, egotism, and domination" strikes me as both mechanistic and reductionist.

Having constructed this conceptually problematic framework, Hendrickson seeks in his narrative to establish the preeminence of the unionist/internationalist idea. He begins to do so by a head-on attack on the "influential" imperialist/nationalist interpretation, which is "standing athwart any general acceptance" of the unionist/internationalist paradigm. The mode of attack is that of flanking movement. Allowing that "the imperial interpretation" is in certain cases "incontrovertible," he nonetheless argues "there are countervailing forces in American life that reject imperialism" (13) and that there are "far more denunciations than defenses of empire and imperialism in the American tradition." (14) Hendrickson views the "bouts of imperialism" in American history as being followed by "periods of sobriety and reassessment" that lead to the country being "inoculated against further adventurism." American imperialism may be "regularly recurring" but also "capable of generating antipodal tendencies that limit its reach." (14)

Hendrickson, hearkening back to an interpretation once proposed by Samuel Flagg Bemis, allows that the U.S. has at times been imperial, but that its imperialism is an anomaly, unrepresentative of an imagined True America. He alleges that the "new imperialism" of the 1890s occurred after "large swaths of the American people became bewitched with an imperialist ethos." (286) This recalls arguments made in *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* . In Frederick Merk's classic formulation "Manifest Destiny and imperialism were traps into which the nation was led in 1846 and 1848," and not "true expressions of the nationalist spirit."[1] This effort, both past and present, to concede an imperial past but deny that it defines the United States is no longer tenable, if it ever was.

The problem with the tally-the-critics approach is that American history is defined not by what scholars, pundits and politicians have said about it but rather what has occurred. In

[1] Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (New York: Random House, 1963), p. 261.

the long run, the reality of an American Empire cannot be denied, erased or covered up by the scribblings of scholars, pundits, and politicians although they have used much ink in an effort to do so.

Hendrickson questions the idea advanced by some scholars (myself included) linking American nationalism with American imperialism. While admitting that in certain respects the imperial view of US history is "not incompatible" with the nationalist school, but "once one reintroduces the creedal element, the intuitively obvious connection between nationalism and imperialism dissolves, and we are left with a posture intensely hostile to imperialism." (19) Hendrickson seems to believe that American notions of consent of the governed have somehow been in serious conflict with the development of an empire, but it must be recollected that "the creedal element" failed (to name just a few examples) to prevent the conquest of Native Americans, failed to prevent the conquest of Hawai'i, failed to prevent the conquest of the Philippines, failed to prevent the conquest of Mexico, failed even to prevent the conquest of the French colonials of New Orleans, brought in to the union without their consent as John Quincy Adams lamented at the time. There have always been those who have decried acts of imperial expansion as counter to U.S. values, but those voices have consistently been ignored or overwhelmed by the imperial imperatives of the moment. A "posture hostile to imperialism" does not equate to a policy hostile to imperialism, as the historical record unmistakably suggests.

Similarly, I am puzzled by the author's assertion that the imperial/national school "with but a few exceptions. . .ignore the significance of the union." (16) The unspecified "few exceptions" to which the author refers might include my work, which emphasizes the practical advantages of security, prosperity, and expansion which union offered; fellow roundtable participant James Lewis, whose take on the importance of union in the creation of American hemispheric empire echoes my own; and Robert Kagan, who foregrounds the tensions concerning the nature and durability of the union in *Dangerous Nation*.[2]

Next, Hendrickson takes on scholarly proponents of American Empire. He recounts "In the 1960s radical historians hit a sore point" by accusing the US of the "sin" of the "imperialism of anti-imperialism," a charge "the keepers of the established truths indignantly denied. More recently, the indignant denials have been followed by seeming acceptance. . . transformed in neo-conservative constructions, into a positive good." (14) This development, Hendrickson suggests, will not be long-lived. He argues that this "uneasy alliance" of Left and Right "is of fairly recent vintage" and not likely to endure for long. (15) I would argue that there is no "uneasy alliance" between the various scholars who constitute an emerging consensus on the existence of an American Empire. Some may be for it, others opposed, but they are united not by political affinity but by a common perception that whether one is criticizing the empire or celebrating it, placing U.S. history

[2] See William Earl Weeks, *John Quincy Adams and American Global Empire* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992); Weeks, "American Nationalism, American Imperialism: An Interpretation of United States Political Economy, 1789-1861," *Journal of the Early Republic* 14 (Winter, 1994): 485-495; James E. Lewis Jr, *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1998), esp. pp. 5-8; and Kagan, *Dangerous Nation*, chapters 3-8.

in an imperial framework offers the most hope for a candid and more complete view of that history.

Along the same lines, Hendrickson states that "There are many other instances of 'Yes, we've always been an empire, and a good thing, too' line in the early 21st century, but its enduring appeal seems doubtful," although he does not make clear why that might be the case. He also notes "official interpretations vehemently rejected that [imperial] construction (in public at least) and insisted that 'we have no utopias to establish or utopias to promote.'" (14-15) One might ask what do the vehement public denials of "official interpretations" have to do with the matter? We can anticipate that "official interpretations" will be among the last to acknowledge the reality of the American Empire, for there is too much to be gained by maintaining an official policy of denial.

Hendrickson seemingly anticipates a return to a 1950s-view of a US history "Born in the Revolution, tested by fire in the Civil War, and coming of age as the 'indispensable nation' in the twentieth century," a framework he claims (without evidence) is shared "overwhelmingly" by U.S. historians. (15) Scholars diverging from this traditional consensus are subject to criticism, even neo-conservatives such as the apostate Kagan, whom he accuses of deviance for his "brilliant but perverse reconstruction of the American diplomatic tradition" in *Dangerous Nation*. (392, note 20) Much like acts of imperialism in U.S history, Hendrickson seems to imply that the imperial interpretation of the present moment is unrepresentative of a hypothesized "main tradition" (21) in American history and subject to being regretted once the neo-conservative enthusiasms of the Bush era diminish. This is the intellectual equivalent of containment, a determined effort to put the cat of American Empire back into the historiographic bag marked "fringe." Kagan chooses to foreground the American Empire in the name of offering citizens a clearer view of the choices before them; *Union, Nation, or Empire*, in contrast, seeks to re-mystify the American Empire in the name of a presumed national interest in doing so. In that sense, *Union, Nation, or Empire* is perhaps best understood as an "official interpretation" of the question.

The author hopes that his book will make a contribution to contemporary discourse about American foreign relations; he argues that the story that he tells recounts "debates of permanent importance illuminating the high purpose of these United States" and reveals "fundamental choices over how we should understand and act in the world." (22) But historians need to approach the study of the American empire with the calm and distance of Gibbon on the Capitoline Hill, pondering the empire whose remnants lay before him. The Beard/Williams School of American imperial interpretation decried the empire as a betrayal of the nation's values while the neo-conservative imperial school exemplified by, among others, Kagan and Niall Ferguson wants to foreground an American empire so that the public might better understand the nation's imperial role in the world. But in the end, the strongest argument for an imperial interpretation is not that it serves to advance any particular political or ideological bent but that it offers the best prospect for a fuller, world-historically grounded view of U.S. history.

Author's Response by David C. Hendrickson, Colorado College

I thank Tom Maddux for organizing this forum and the five scholars for contributing to it. I am very gratified by the generous comments made by four of the reviewers, but will give most attention to the critical review by William Weeks, who raises important issues worth serious consideration.

Though it would be logical and is certainly tempting to investigate the years since 1941 from the framework offered in the study, as David Armitage and Reginald Stuart suggest, it is not my present intention to do so. Having mistakenly projected the scope of the present volume in *Peace Pact*, "don't ask, don't tell" begins to seem the appropriate stance for me.[1] Though I thank Stuart for his thoughtful prospectus, I intend to do some other things for a while before re-engaging with the vexed question.

I also cannot offer a full response to the various critiques, whether of omission and commission, that the various reviewers offer, though I bear more happily with the former than the latter. I accept Armitage's point that I might have done more with James Brown Scott and other international lawyers, though it should be clear from the work that I am friendly to international law and would not, like Andrew Jackson, "d--n Grotius, Puffendorf, and Vattel." I incline much more to John Quincy Adams's view of that question. (154)[2] In a work covering some 150 years, there is inescapably a great deal of abridgment and compression necessary. Chris Tudda's point about various key events being absent from the narrative could be made about many other clipped descriptions of diplomatic, constitutional, and political goings-on. I accept James Lewis's careful depiction of the work's limitations (while being especially pleased by his characterization of its strengths). Though I certainly make use of diplomatic history and have sought to revise conventional accounts of its architecture, I generally treat diplomatic episodes with compression and merely to describe the arena within which arguments played out over union and independence, war and peace, civilization and barbarism, empire and liberty, free trade and protection, and multiple other questions bearing on the relations of distinct states and peoples. Though I appreciate Tudda's kind view of the book's overall merits, I was taken aback by his characterization of my argument in some particulars. While I emphasize the "exigencies of the union" as a basic factor governing policy, I do not set this factor in opposition to all the factors Tudda mentions: "continental and overseas expansion, independence, neutralism, free trade, protectionism, nationalism, internationalism, and federalism."

Armitage is undoubtedly right to note that international relations theorists have an affinity for trinitarian analysis, though others do so as well; among political scientists, he might have added Samuel P. Huntington to his list.[3] Armitage's intimation that this may be a vice

[1] David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), xi. But see 381n14.

[2] Numbers in parentheses in the text are to the pages of *Union, Nation, and Empire*.

[3] See especially by Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980) and *Who Are We: The Challenges to America's Identity?* (New York, 2004).

rather than a virtue is possibly well-grounded, though I note that my explanatory framework is similar to D.W. Meinig's conceptual scheme (of federation, nation, and empire) in his great series on *The Making of America*.[4] Frank Ninkovich has also shown that internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism are valuable explanatory lenses through which to interrogate (and narrate) U.S. foreign policy in the twentieth century.[5] My debt to Martin Wight and his followers, enthralled but perplexed by various tripartite schemes, is real and substantial. I am glad to keep such eminent company, but cannot object to Armitage's witty characterization of my book as a "richly heterodox study conducted on orthodox trinitarian lines."

Whereas Armitage almost teasingly suggests the limitations of this scheme, Weeks rakes me over the coals for a simplistic, mechanistic, and reductionist framework. The curious thing is that Weeks employs the same framework in his criticism of my work (as elsewhere in his writings); he simply orders the relations among union, nation, and empire differently. "It now seems clear," wrote Weeks recently, characterizing the Founders, "that the desire for empire is the chief motive for union, and that need for union was the chief motive for the construction of a distinct American nationality, as a means of conjuring support for that union." [6] While my inflections would differ, I see nothing wrong in principle with this interpretive juggling.

All these terms, together with analogous conceptions of internationalism, nationalism, and imperialism, have complicated histories, and my purpose in the first twenty pages of the work is to describe briefly their logics of interpretation and to pose a set of problems regarding their historical development and mutual interrelationship. Rather than seeking to reach a directed verdict with regard to the relative importance of union, nation, or empire, my key point is to insist on the inadequacy of univocal accounts that privilege one of these concepts, each of them powerful in its own right, to the exclusion of the others. I do not seek to "establish the preeminence of the unionist/internationalist idea" throughout American history but see that strain, like nationalism and imperialism, as subject to cycles of rise, eclipse, and renovation.

I find Weeks' characterization of my views to be incorrect in many other particulars. He writes, for example, that I attack the idea linking American nationalism with imperialism, whereas in fact I argue that "it is easy to see various paths by which conduct rooted in nationalist impulses can give way to domination and to identify episodes in which nationalism and imperialism were joined at the hip." (17) But the relationship is not uni-directional: it is also true that many opponents of imperialism considered themselves nationalists and appealed to elements in the national creed, both liberal and republican, that are avowedly hostile to imperialism. While proponents of this view found themselves

[4] D.W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History*, 4 vols. (New Haven, CT, 1988-2004).

[5] Frank Ninkovich, *The United States and Imperialism* (Malden, MA, 2001), and *idem*, *The Wilsonian Century: U.S. Foreign Policy since 1900*.

[6] William Weeks, "*Dangerous Nation* Roundtable Review," H-Diplo, 29 April 2007, 4, at http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/DangerousNation-Weeks.pdf

on the losing side of the argument at various junctures, they did not always do so. Weeks seems to think that this is an all-or-nothing proposition, that either nationalism leads on to imperialism or it doesn't, but I don't think that this is a reasonable representation of the historical dynamics at play. The distinctions I offer—between "hard" and "soft" versions of nationalism, between universalistic versions that seek to replicate one's own domestic model everywhere and particularist versions that recognize the right of other nations to autonomous development, between versions privileging "the national interest" and those that emphasize the projection of internal cultural battles onto the outer world, between nationalists who embrace, and nationalists who reject, either internationalism or imperialism—may not adequately cover the ground, but any such interpretive framework is going to be rough around the edges. That is an inexorable consequence of historical multiplicity. The diverse ways in which nationalism has figured in public consciousness suggests that it may lead on to a lot of things, many of which are incompatible with one another.

Weeks says that I anticipate "a return to a 1950s-view of a US history 'Born in the Revolution, tested by fire in the Civil War, and coming of age as the "indispensable nation" in the twentieth century.'" In fact, the first half of my book is directed toward questioning the primacy of a nationalist framework. In writing that passage (in which I was seeking to develop aspects of the nationalist viewpoint rather than stating my own opinion), I was giving the official view of the nation such as one might find it in presidential messages of the last half century, but which was also reflected in the thinking of liberal historians (like Samuel Flagg Bemis, Richard Morris, and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.) in the post World War II years. Since I counterpoise this view to the imperial interpretations that have gained increasing sway over the past generation, I certainly did not intend to say that this 1950s framework is now shared "overwhelmingly" by U.S. historians, though I think that something like it was once the predominant view.

The proclivity that I do think is "overwhelmingly" shared, among scholars, journalists, elected officials, and citizens, and which is generally no less marked among historians stressing imperialism as among those highlighting liberalism or pluralism, is the propensity to organize historical narrative in relationship to "the nation." My main criticism of this tendency is that it takes for granted a national cohesion that is much more apparent in retrospect than it was at the time, assuming what to early nineteenth century Americans remained very much to be proved. Once the federal union, with its balancing of rival state and sectional interests, is brought into view, many old questions are seen in a new light. Expansion, for instance, becomes the occasion not only of aggrandizement but also potentially of dissolution; the game is not one of addition alone but also potentially of subtraction, with each in play against the other. For such reasons I criticized in the book a passage in Weeks in which he wrote that "It may be that the only truly realistic interpretations of American foreign policy are revisionist accounts that attribute every act, no matter how apparently altruistic, to a selfish nationalism."[7] As I commented: "This is reductionism that does not reduce far enough. It sees far too much unity of purpose amid

[7] William E. Weeks, "New Directions in the Study of Early American Foreign Relations," *Diplomatic History* 17 (1993): 73-96, at 82

the stipulated riot of selfishness. Nationalism is not the only vessel into which self-interest may be poured." (405n10)

Weeks directs his main fire on my failure to recognize that imperialism "defines" the United States. He sees my work as an "official interpretation." The innocent reader could easily suppose that my project is to justify America's world role, in evident contrast to the iconoclast Robert Kagan, whose work on American Empire, says Weeks, offers citizens "a clearer view of the choices before them." Yet it is very odd to portray my book as an official interpretation when I devote much attention to the views of various dissenters—I am just as interested in developing the argument of "the country" as "the court," whereas Kagan is decidedly concerned with the accumulation of useful precedents for the exercise of U.S. power, the more aggressive the better.[8] I do think that there are countervailing forces to imperialism in American life, but it is unfair and misleading to say that I seek to blot imperialism from the record. I write: "Iroquois, Cherokees, Seminoles, Mexicans, Cubans, Filipinos, Nicaraguans, and Haitians are the predecessors of those peoples—Vietnamese and Iraqis, among others—that have latterly been on the receiving end of U.S. military power, in wars and occupations that can only be styled as imperial." (13) From beginning to end, I follow, almost obsessively, the argument that contemporaries conducted over empire, while stressing that this had a vital "internal" as well as "external" aspect: "The struggle for empire over North America, an aim pursued against both aboriginal peoples and European powers, was also a dual struggle for empire and a balance of power among the sections." (116)

A basic divide separating Weeks and myself concerns the role of ideas in historical interpretation. "American history," he writes, "is defined not by what scholars, pundits and politicians have said about it but rather what has occurred. In the long run, the reality of an American Empire cannot be denied, erased or covered up by the scribblings of scholars, pundits, and politicians although they have used much ink in an effort to do so." If your starting point is that everybody is involved in a cover-up, then there is little reason to investigate how leaders justified what they were doing, and as little reason to record critical voices that "have consistently been ignored or overwhelmed by the imperial imperatives of the moment." I am interested in both the official justifications and the dissenting voices, whereas Weeks regards both with derision (the former for hypocrisy, the latter for powerlessness). Possibly I may misunderstand his viewpoint here, but I do not see how "what has occurred" can be stripped away from what contemporaries thought and said about it, as Weeks seems to recommend. That is not my idea of the historian's craft.

Weeks begins his review by noting the movement of opinion, with respect to the concept or "specter" of American Empire "[f]rom its days as a damning left –wing indictment of America in the 1960s and 70s, to a period of grudging acceptance in the 80s and 90s, and evolving into a positive good (at least in the eyes of neo-conservatives) in the years following the 9/11 attacks." He quotes me to similar effect and seems to like the "positive good" formulation, but then rejects the idea that there is an "uneasy alliance" between those who 'celebrate' and those who 'criticize' the empire. On the contrary, intimates

[8] Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation* (New York, 2006).

Weeks, they will remain forever united on the ground of Historical Truth. Noting the many recent expressions of the view that "yes, we've always been an empire, and a good thing, too," I ventured the opinion that its enduring appeal is doubtful and noted that official interpretations from the Bush administration vehemently denied the imputation of empire.

There are a number of separate issues raised by these questions. In what was a work of history, I did not want to enter into the lists in the argument over contemporary American empire, though I have participated in that debate and see various parallels between the argument our generation has conducted and debates that occurred previously. But since Weeks presses me on that point, I am happy to oblige: I have thought the enduring appeal of the neoconservative synthesis to be doubtful mainly because the imperialism it has promoted is so beset by contradictions and mistaken assumptions of American power as to ensure a bad outcome. But its enduring appeal is also doubtful because imperialism carries negative connotations of domination and exploitation that cross widely held conceptions of legitimacy.[9] Weeks, in his review of Robert Kagan's *Dangerous Nation*, notes that Kagan himself shies away from an imperial terminology,[10] and many other neoconservatives said (following Theodore Roosevelt's stance in 1900) that "imperialism and militarism" had nothing to do with Bush's policies.[11] I agree with Weeks that these denials are not to be taken at face value; at the same time, they are clearly significant in assessing the enduring appeal of the "Yes, we've always been an empire, and a good thing, too" line. The division in the neoconservative mind over how to justify empire (with a few having taken off the mask of power, and others seeing that it weakens their case to do so) attests to the existence of a legitimacy problem that is not likely to be resolved by candid admissions of illegitimate purposes. To my knowledge, few diplomatic historians have adopted the second half of the line in question, but I imagine that, Weeks apart, there should be among them some quivers of anxiety over the uses to which the "positive good" school has put the first part of the theorem.

Weeks evidently disagrees with the idea that there are countervailing forces to imperialism in American life. But I think there are pertinent differences between, say, Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, or James Polk and Abraham Lincoln, or Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. If they were all implicated in empire, they were so in very different ways, and I do not believe that it contributes to historical understanding to emblazon "American Empire" on all their foreheads as their first and defining characteristic. As a matter of basic disposition, I prefer a multidimensional as against a one-dimensional account, and Week's emphasis on American Empire as the thing that has defined us for all time has, for me, a flattening effect on history, robbing it of contingency, choice, and

[9] These points are given expanded treatment in David C. Hendrickson, "Toward Universal Empire," *World Policy Journal* 19 (2002): 1-10; "A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy," ibid, 21 (2004): 102-113; "The Curious Case of American Hegemony: Imperial Aspirations and National Decline," ibid, 22 (2005): 1-22; and, with Robert W. Tucker, "The Sources of American Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83 (November/December 2004). These and other recent writings on contemporary issues may be found at http://personalwebs.coloradocollege.edu/~dhendrickson/essays.html

[10] Weeks, *Dangerous Nation* Roundtable Review, 6.

[11] Roosevelt's denial is noted by John B. Judis, *The Folly of Empire: What George W. Bush Could Learn from Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson* (New York, 2004), 60n.

nuance. As for countervailing forces, it mattered that Republican leaders believed, after the War of 1812, that another war would destroy the union. It mattered that Nicholas Trist, who regarded the Mexican War as an act of iniquity, negotiated a treaty with Mexico that was far from Polk's desire but that placed the president in a position where he felt he had to acquiesce. It mattered that Republicans denounced "Ostend, Greytown, Kansas, and all" in the 1850s and saw Texas annexation and the Mexican war as naked aggressions, views that carried over into the Republican ascendancy after the Civil War. It mattered that a huge gap opened between what imperialists said was going to happen in the Philippines and what actually did happen, such that by 1902 a reaction had taken place against it and the country was in no mood for another such enterprise. It mattered (though not, admittedly, for long) that Franklin Roosevelt turned away, with his Good Neighbor Policy, from decades of imperial intervention in the western hemisphere.

With Weeks, I admire the ideal of historical objectivity and detachment, but must also agree with Charles Maier that historical judgments—or at least many important ones—inevitably reflect a political stance.[12] One remedy for the impossibility of obtaining complete and final objectivity is to be open about one's subjectivities. I identify my own as a blend of constitutional realism and liberal internationalism, with a strong dollop of anti-imperialism. (xv) For his part, Weeks acknowledges no subjectivities, and imagines that Gibbon had none either. I do not believe that this supposition is correct.[13]

In a work concerned with the evolution of ideas, "presentism" is in one sense inescapable: there is a strong resemblance between previous arguments and those of our own day. What was said in opposition to empire at various times in the past is pretty much what can be said against it in the present, among innumerable other affinities. These past arguments over war and peace, civilization and barbarism, empire and liberty, and the rest, are pitched at a level of generality that make them potentially relevant to many other ages and places, including our own. They are susceptible to restatement in different circumstances; they have in fact been re-stated. With few exceptions, I do not draw these parallels explicitly, as inappropriate to the work in which I was engaged, but they undoubtedly exist, and in certain cases they aggravate the difficulty of achieving anything like true detachment. (Can American historians truly be neutral about human slavery, needless war, or despotic empire? Ought they to feign indifference to the moral issues such practices raise?)

These obstacles to detachment should not be exaggerated. On many of the questions taken up, I have a decided ambivalence and actually see merit in both sides. I think that free traders and protectionists, for example, both make cogent points; that there is something to be said both for and against the various wars in American history, even when my sympathies incline to one side of the argument; that reflection on the union and the U.S.

[12] Charles S. Maier, *Among Empires* Roundtable Review, H-Diplo, 19 October 2006, 3, at http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/roundtables/PDF/Maier-response.pdf

[13] For an exhaustive depiction of Gibbon's intellectual world and how it affected his interpretive problems in *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, see J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, 4 vols. to date (New York, 2001).

engagement with international organization can tell us something about the necessity *and* limits of international cooperation—in other words, that both nationalists and internationalists contribute important insights to the discussion. As a college professor and an old high school debater, I value the thrust and parry of polemical argument whether I am confident or ambivalent about the question before the house. As an intellectual historian and political scientist, my basic propensity is to believe, with R. W. B. Lewis, that a political culture "achieves identity not through the ascendancy of one particular set of convictions as through the emergence of its peculiar and distinctive dialogue."[14] It is the American dialogue regarding the relations among distinct states and peoples that I sought to render concisely and accurately in this book, and it was written in the hope that men and women of diverse ideological persuasions can profit from it.

Copyright © 2009 H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, H-Diplo, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the H-Diplo Editors at h-diplo@h-net.msu.edu.

[14] R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1955), 2, cited in Hendrickson, *Peace Pact*, 18.